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battery slammed fire and thunder out. Flaming daggers against velvet night. Her salvo crashed away off left and short. Over there the sea jumped up half a dozen mushroom jets of foam. Steve had thrown her gunnery off with his runaway and his broken speed. And now he had to play the fool before that Jap. He couldn't fight her. She could blow him literally out of the water with those heavy guns. His whole purpose was to make her steam back across the bows of the sub X4. He had to make her follow him. He had to make her think she had spotted a crippled duck.

"Rudder amidships! All engines full ahead. All guns at local control. One round. Fire Number One. . . . Fire Number Two. . . ."

His five-inchers thundered. One after the other. Single and ragged. Like a fighting ship with its fire control all shot to bits. And he yawed the Framm so she'd plunge and roll as if she were badly damaged forward, caught by surprise, wanting only to run for home. So the Jap blasted out again. But only her forward turrets now. That meant she was coming for him! She meant to gobble him up! Thirty minutes now. Could he last that long? Could he get that cruiser to Harry in time? When he was a kid near Fishers Sound, he always brought stuff to Harry whenever his brother said "Wantee."

That's what Harry was thinking, too, in the control room of the damaged submarine X4. The men were at battle stations, nerves stretched taut as fiddlestrings. They knew what they were up against. The Pacific Ocean was weeping in through the sub's strained plates. She was losing buoyancy all the time. According to the diving officer called Johnny, she had twenty minutes left, and that fellow told no lies. . . . Nineteen. . . . Eighteen. . . .

"Fifteen minutes, sir."

The voice sounded soft and boomy in the funny, hollow stillness of a pigboat down below. The skipper didn't say a word. He knew every man in the sub was praying for him. It was his show now. If he kept her down too long, they were all of them dead. If he surfaced in range of that cruiser's guns, the sub X4 and the Joshua Framm were both just heaps of twisted junk.

Suddenly the skipper stopped riding the periscope. He caught gun flashes through the eyepiece. Four thousand yards. But that's all he could see. The sweat poured down his face. Who was it? Steve or the enemy? He had to be sure at a game like this. Now the heating thrum of propellers began to vibrate the submarine's hull. Harry was tense and rigid in a concentration that's like agony. And all the while odd stuff went humming across the back of his brain. It's funny, but it does at times like that. You hardly know it, but it's there. Gun flashes again. Three thousand yards. He saw flame splash up from a hit on a reeling foc'sle head. The Framm! That was Steve, taking hell. Where was the Jap cruiser? Steve always wanted to be a submariner. He thought that pretty swell. But he couldn't. Steve was always taking second choice. Even at the Academy. Funny he never thought of it like that before. Steve always made the throw to second base or first. Someone else got the putout credit on the scoring card. The best Steve ever got was assists. Like now. That was Steve up there. Acting the decoy for Harry. Luring a Jap eight-inch-gun cruiser across his bows at point-blank torpedo range. Flashing his searchlight on now, so Harry could see his target and identify his prey. He made her black silhouette enormous, covering nine divisions of Harry's screen. We——

"Ten minutes, sir."

Up there, eight-inchers showed their deadly stabs of flame again. Steve's searchlight suddenly blotted out. But Harry couldn't look to see what was happening to the Framm. All he could do for her was pray. The heavy cruiser was so sure of her kill by now that the searchlight on her own forward battle mast clapped out. Recklessly. A purple band of light. Harry held to that. He had to. The time was now. Steve did his share. He played the fool. He brought the target on the range.

"All forward tubes ready for firing! Give him twenty-six knots." Harry's voice was low, steady, calling adjustments to regulate torpedo depth and course. His whole life and training was focused on this thing. He wanted those fish running hot, normal, true. "Four degrees left rudder. All the ohms you can spare, Johnny."

"Five minutes, sir."

"Stand by!"

"Full dive on the bow diving plane," droned the diving officer.

"Fire One," said Harry softly.

A gentle shock went through the sub.

"One fired, sir."

"Fire Two."

"Two fired, sir."

"Fire Three. . . . Fire Four!" Harry was taking no chances. He was giving her the works. For Steve. Steve deserved that much. "Full left rudder!" the skipper said, instinctively

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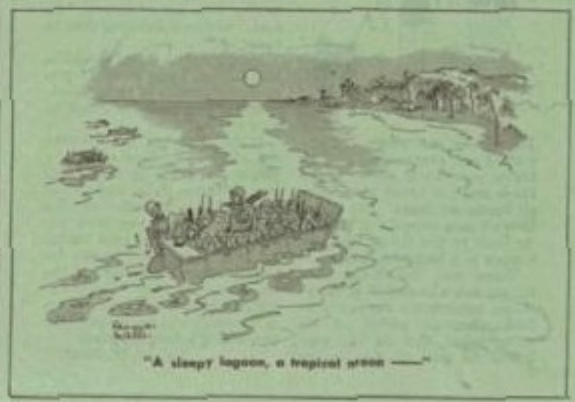

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